

Needs Assessment of Arkansas Faith-Based Community  
Capacity to Provide Social Services

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## **Abstract**

In partnership with the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism and others listed below, a telephone survey of Arkansas church congregations was utilized to assess the capacity of the Arkansas Faith-Based Community to provide human services. Data from the survey will be used to develop an action plan to build the capacity of faith-based organizations to devise their own social service programs, apply for public sources of funding, and successfully implement, manage, and evaluate those programs to better meet the needs of Arkansas citizens, while maintaining their unique status as faith-based institutions.

## **Introduction:**

Both the Charitable Choice Provision of the 1996 welfare reform legislation and the Bush administration have called for a partnership of faith-based agencies with public agencies to provide social services. The belief is that faith-based agencies will be more effective than public agencies because they emphasize thrift, individual responsibility, responsiveness, and flexibility in the provision of service, while also allowing clients to be personally invested in their own rehabilitation (Smith and Sosin, 2001).

Faith-related groups can be defined as "Social service organizations that have any of the following: a formal fundraising or administrative arrangement with a religious authority or authorities; a historical rite of this kind; a specific commitment to act within the dictates of a particular established faith; or a commitment to work together that stems from a common religion" (Smith and Sosin, 2001). These groups may become involved in social service provision under the Charitable Choice Provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. This provision allows religious groups to receive TANF, Community Service Block Grants, and the Labor Department's Welfare-to-Work block grant moneys to fund their efforts (Spain, 2001). The provision prohibits religious discrimination among the groups and protects the religious freedoms of the beneficiaries (Spain, 2001; Cnaan and Boddie, 2002). The

participating groups may choose a staff that reflects their particular religious views, but may not pressure or coerce participants into forming certain beliefs or to attend religious services (Cnaan and Boddie, 2002).

In an extension of the idea started by Charitable Choice, President Bush has signed two executive orders and supports pending legislation for the furtherance of faith-based initiatives. Three goals have been identified for his initiative: (1) eliminate regulatory, contracting and other programmatic obstacles to the participation of faith-based and other community organizations in providing social services; (2) coordinate a comprehensive effort to incorporate faith-based and other community organizations in departmental programs to the extent possible; and (3) devise proposals to develop innovative pilot and demonstration programs to increase participation of faith-based and community organizations (Gibelman and Gelman, 2002).

Despite guarantees of religious freedom for faith-based groups who receive federal funds for the provision of social services, faith-related groups have not been lining up to participate. A study by Cnaan and Boddie (2001) found that only 8% of the pastors surveyed were familiar with Charitable Choice, and only 3% were willing to apply for public funds. Another study by Owens (2000) found that 43% of the partnerships between the public sector and the religious community examined were faith-based groups that had a 501(c)(3) designation and were eligible for public funds before the passage of Charitable Choice. Owens also found that the states, to that point, had only spent .03 percent of their TANF funds on Charitable Choice collaborations. Chaves (1999a) similarly found that only 24% of the key informants responding were aware of Charitable Choice legislation, and 15% of the congregations were so opposed to the idea

of receiving government money that they developed a congregational policy against receiving such support. Additionally, Chaves found that 11% of the congregations surveyed received outside funds for their social services, and only 3% received government funds.

While some faith-based groups oppose the use of government funds for social service programs because of ideological beliefs or fear of excessive entanglement of church and state, some observers believe that the lack of faith-based/public partnerships is due to the limited capacity of small congregations to effectively deliver social services (Fund Raising Management, 2001; Kennedy and Bielefeld, 2002; Farnsley, 2001). If the faith-based/community partnership is to work, an aggressive outreach and capacity-building plan will need to be developed for Arkansas. For example, the State of Indiana has developed FaithWorks Indiana to provide technical assistance to faith-based organizations. As a result of these efforts, the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) has found that faith-based organizations in Indiana were much more likely to be involved in social service provision and much more interested in receiving government funds for such activities than were other such organizations nationwide (FaithWorks, 2001).

Using the Indiana FSSA statewide survey and the National Congregations Survey conducted by Chaves (1999) as a beginning template, this study assesses the capacity-building needs of Arkansas church congregations. In partnership with Chris Pyle, Director of Family Policy for Governor Mike Huckabee, the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) Divisions of Volunteerism (DOV) and County Operations (DCO), Black Community Developers, and the Arkansas Department of Education, Early

Childhood/Grants Initiatives Unit, a plan will be formulated to develop the capacity of Arkansas faith-based congregations to provide social services.

### **Significance of the Study:**

It is important to gauge the interest of faith-based organizations to participate in provision of social services because since the passage of the 1996 Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, welfare and social services systems have changed dramatically. The system of long-term supports for families with children is gone, replaced with a system where time for public assistance is limited. In order to help families make the transition to self-sufficiency, new and comprehensive methods of solving family problems needs to be devised. The faith-based partnership in social service provision is believed by many, including Presidents Reagan, Clinton and Bush (Boddie, 2002), to be one answer to solve the problems of low-incomes families. However, because the number of faith-based/community partnerships is small, the real effectiveness of such partnerships is not known. It is important to get social service moneys into the hands of churches and church-related groups to see if this method will indeed work, and perhaps work better than alternative methods of service delivery.

### **Methods:**

In conjunction with the community partners identified previously, the survey tool first utilized by the Indiana FSSA, based on Chaves' (1999) National Congregation Survey, was revised to meet Arkansas needs. Utilizing input from CUP grant partners, questions were added to assist in assessing the organizational needs of faith-based organizations to provide social services (See Appendix A). Further refinement of the survey was done to make it more compatible for use in a telephone survey.

A list of phone numbers, addresses, and names of contact persons (where available) was obtained from American Church Lists. Telephone calls were randomly made from this list of approximately 4,000 congregations in Arkansas. Callers asked to speak to the pastor, but interviewed anyone willing to provide the information. The goal was to complete four hundred telephone surveys; however, because of the great interest in the subject of Charitable Choice and the willingness of those who answered the phone to talk about their congregation's participation in social service provision, 701 interviews were completed. This represents a response rate of 72.5%  $[\text{Completed interviews}] / [(\text{Completed Interviews} + (\text{Refused} + \text{Non-contact/eligible}))]$  and a cooperation rate of 81.3%  $[(\text{Completed} + \text{Partial Interviews}) / ((\text{Completed} + \text{Partial}) + \text{Refused})]$ . The response rate and cooperation rate were computed based on the Standard Definitions used by The American Association for Public Opinion Research (2000).

The results here are particularly subject to response and non-response errors during the survey. Because callers questioned whoever answered the telephone and was willing to talk, many of the respondents felt that they were inadequately informed to answer all of the questions. This means that some of the responses in the survey, particularly those regarding monetary amounts, may be reported incorrectly. Questions regarding the racial composition of the congregations are also examples of response errors, because the respondents often offered their best guess for an answer. The inadequate knowledge of some respondents also led to a larger than desirable amount of non-responses on some questions.

**Results:**

Results from the survey will be reported and discussed along several thematic lines, beginning with a description of the churches surveyed. Initially the results will be reported in terms of frequency of response, followed by a more detailed analysis of the trends observed where relevant.

**What Kinds of Congregations Responded?**

The largest denominational group to respond was Baptist (49%). Within the Baptist category though, there were Southern Baptists (29%), Freewill Baptists (1.6%), Missionary Baptists (12.2%), American Baptists (3.6%), and a mix of other varieties of Baptists (1.7%). Table 1 indicates that number of respondents from other denominations, in order of frequency. The denominational breakdown compares favorably with the proportions of each denomination in Arkansas as reported by the American Church List, from which the sample was drawn.

Table 1

Denominational Affiliation of Respondents

Denomination	N	Per Cent
Southern Baptist	168	29.2%
Missionary Baptist	70	12.2%
United Methodist	66	11.5%
Assembly of God	60	10.4%
Presbyterian	27	4.7%
Pentecostal	26	4.5%
American Baptist	21	3.6%
Roman Catholic	19	3.3%
Church of the Nazarene	14	2.4%
Episcopal	13	2.3%
Other Varieties Baptist	12	2.1%
Other	12	2.1%
Lutheran (Missouri Synod)	11	1.9%
Freewill Baptist	9	1.6%
Church of Christ	8	1.4%
Lutheran (ELCA)	7	1.2%
Methodist (CME, AME)	7	1.2%
Disciples of Christ	6	1.0%
Church of God	5	.9%
Seventh Day Adventist	4	.7%
Interdenominational	3	.5%
Mennonite	3	.5%
Evangelical	2	.3%
Apostolic	1	.2%
LDS	1	.2%



The size of the responding congregations is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Size of Responding Congregations

Size	N	Per Cent in Sample
1-50	99	14.1%
51-100	128	18.3%
101-200	167	23.8%
201-500	190	27.1%
501-1000	65	9.3%
Over 1000	49	7.0%

Most of the congregations considered themselves to be rural congregations (44.5%), although 29.7% considered themselves to be urban and 21.5% considered the church to be located in a suburban area. The majority of the congregations reported that they were a member of a denomination (82.2%). When grouped by type of congregation, 71% of the respondents were from denominations considered to be theologically conservative, 23% were from mainline denominations, 3% were Roman Catholic, with less than one per cent from traditional non-mainline denominations. For an explanation of these denominational groupings, see Note 1.

Representatives of the responding congregations were asked what percentage of their congregation was white, black, Asian, Hispanic, or other. Looking at churches that responded they were 100% of one race, 2% of the congregations were black, 44% were white and 54% were mixed. Only one church was categorized as other by the survey callers. The American Church List database does not break down the congregations by race, however, with only 2% African American congregations in the sample (as compared with 18% in the general population of Arkansas), this population is under-

represented. This under-representation is believed to occur because many African American churches are smaller and without full-time staff to answer the telephone, if a telephone is even available. Due to the nature of the database, it was not possible to oversample smaller congregations.

#### Are Congregations Providing Social Services/If So What Kind?

The vast majority of the congregations (83%) participated in or supported some sort of community outreach or social service ministries within the past twelve months. This figure is higher than the 79% reported in the FaithWorks Indiana survey and the 57% reported in Chaves' (1999a) study. As demonstrated in Figure 3, size was a significant factor in whether a congregation participated in provision of human services. The relationship was strong ( $\gamma = -.466$ ) and statistically significant at  $p < .01$ .

Figure 3

#### Provision of Human Services by Size

##### Approximate Total Membership

	1-50	51-100	101-200	201-500	501-1000	1001+
<u>Provided Services</u>						
Yes	59.6%	79.7%	84.4%	89.5%	98.5%	93.9%
No	39.4%	20.3%	15.6%	10.5%	1.5%	6.1%

However, there was no relationship between the setting of the congregation (whether it was urban, rural or suburban) and the willingness to provide human services, and the predominant race of the congregation did not matter. Congregations were grouped along denominational lines from more liberal to more conservative to see if

these groupings made a difference in whether the church provides human services, but no statistically significant difference was observed.

The small number of congregations that did not provide community service ministries were asked why they did not. When reasons were given, only 13 responded that it was for theological reasons, while others stated that it was for financial reasons ( $n = 7$ ) or that their resources go to other purposes or through other means ( $n = 6$ ). A large number of congregations indicated that their nonparticipation was due to the lack of time, energy or people ( $n = 40$ ). Related to the lack of time, energy and people was the response that the church is small, rural or elderly ( $n = 14$ ).

Like their counterparts in Indiana, Arkansas congregations were involved in a variety of community service ministries. Table 4 displays the number and kind of each type of ministry.

Table 4

## Types of Human Service Ministries Provided

Building Houses/Redevelopment	83
Child Care/Foster Care	49
Clothing Drives	179*
Counseling	86
Family Planning/Support Services	70
Financial Assistance	174*
Food Drives/Food Pantries	401*
Education/Schools	113
Legal/Medical/Mental Health Services	109
Mentoring/Tutoring	59
Refugee support/National Disaster Relief	57
Senior Services	96
Shelter: day/overnight/transitional	102
Business/community/neighborhood assoc	73
Vocational/job training	20
Youth recreation	115
Prison/Drug rehab/Drug education	17
Help with/do fund-raising for other nonprofits	61
Hispanic programs	2
Blood drives	5
Sharefest	3
Other	46

In Arkansas, as in Indiana, most congregations have three community outreach ministries, with the most common being food, shelter, and emergency financial assistance (FaithWorks Indiana, 2001). It is worthy of note that Sharefest was mentioned spontaneously (i.e. was not a regular question on the survey) by at least three congregations as a community outreach ministry of the church. These responses were picked up in the process of coding miscellaneous stray answers. It is quite possible that more congregations mentioned Sharefest, but the interviewer classified them as “other” without making a notation as to what was said. Sharefest is joint effort of approximately one hundred churches from a variety of denominations in the Central Arkansas area. For the past five years, church members have participated in a weekend event that includes a

blood drive, a community service work day on Saturday, gathering of donated items such as food and coats, and a community-wide celebration on Sunday evening. Through Sharefest efforts, over one million dollars of manpower and materials have been invested in refurbishing over forty public schools, as well as many neighborhoods, homes and public buildings, and nearly \$700,000 in cash has been collected and shared with over twenty nonprofit organizations, according to Ray Williams of Fellowship Bible Church (email communication, February 2004). Williams reports that similar efforts have taken place in Texarkana, Conway, and Harrison, with one in the planning stages for Jonesboro.

The Manna Center in Siloam Springs is another community-wide effort of multiple congregations to provide community outreach ministries uncovered by the survey. Established ten years ago to provide emergency food, clothing and prescription drugs for low income families, the Manner Center serves people in a fifty mile radius of Siloam Springs, going some into Oklahoma as well as Arkansas. The \$100,000 annual budget is funded through a combination of church pledges, a grant by an anonymous donor, the United Way, and some U.S. Department of Agriculture funding, along with donated clothing and food from individuals and churches. In addition to being supplied free of charge to needy families, the clothing is sold in a thrift store, the proceeds of which are turned back into the ministry. The Manna Center has four paid staff, with a team of about sixty volunteers. (Source: Telephone interview with Kathy Elrod, February 2004.)

Many of the congregations (73%) reported that they had partnered with other organizations or churches in providing their community service ministries. Partners were

other congregations (n = 303), ministerial alliances (n = 176), nonprofit agencies (n = 191), and government agencies (n = 58). A small portion of the congregations (13%) had established a nonprofit organization separate from the church to provide community outreach ministries, although thirty-one percent were interested in obtaining information on how to establish a nonprofit organization.

Less than half of the responding congregations (46%) reported that they had heard of Charitable Choice legislation, but a similar number (40%) thought their congregation might apply for government money to support their community outreach programs if it were available. A smaller number (22%) said that their congregation had a policy against receiving funds from local, state, or federal government. There was a statistically significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) between black churches and white churches in their willingness to apply for government money to support community outreach programs-- 100% of black congregations said they would apply versus only 28.6% of the white congregations.

#### How are Community Service Ministries Funded and Who Staffs Them?

Some of the information obtained was limited because of the knowledge of the person who answered the phone, particularly when it came to funding of community service ministries. In many cases, the pastor or secretary who replied to most of the questions deferred to the financial secretary or church treasurer. Follow-up calls to those knowledgeable about finances were made when the first respondent offered the necessary information. Based on this more limited set of information, the average amount of money the responding Arkansas congregations directly donated towards all of their community outreach ministries over a twelve month period was \$9545. The median

donation was \$3500 (compared to \$1200 for Indiana congregations), and the most occurring donation was \$5000. These figures were sandwiched between a low of \$60 and a high of \$250,000.

Only 20% of the churches said that their community outreach ministries were supported by outside funds. Outside funds came from two types of sources: foundations, businesses or the United Way, or from government sources. Congregations reported that they received as little as \$300 and as much as \$50,000 to fund community service ministries from foundations, businesses or the United Way during the most recent fiscal year. The average amount obtained from these sources was \$11,790. Twenty per cent of the responding churches also said that their outside funds came from local, state, or federal government. While twenty-three churches said their funds came from government sources, only ten could say how much. The average amount received from government sources was \$8964, with a high of \$30,000.

Most of the programs were run by volunteers, with 87% of the churches reporting that a member of the congregation performed volunteer work for the social service programs of the church, compared to only 21% of the congregations reporting that paid staff worked on the programs. Most of the churches had only one (55%) or two (24%) staff members working on the programs. The number of volunteer adults ranged from a low of four to a high of 1200. However, most churches had less than thirty volunteer adults (61%). Youth also volunteered, but not in such great numbers. Most congregations had from one to ten youth volunteers (50%), while another 45% had from eleven to fifty volunteers.

How Does Arkansas Compare to Indiana and the Nation and  
Are There Denominational Differences?

This survey of Arkansas congregations was largely patterned after one used by FaithWorks Indiana and the National Congregations Survey so that Arkansas results could be compared with those other surveys. As reported earlier, 83% of Arkansas congregations had participated in or supported some sort of community outreach or social service ministries within the past twelve months. This figure is higher than the 79% reported in the FaithWorks Indiana survey and the 57% reported in Chaves' (1999a) study. Table 5 compares Arkansas with Indiana and the Nation, based on data reported in the FaithWorks Indiana 2001 report.

Table 5

Comparison of Arkansas with Indiana and the Nation on Selected Measures

	% Arkansas Congregations (n = 701) that:	% of Indiana Congregations (n = 412) that:	% of National Congregations (n = 1236) that:
Participate in human services	83	79	57
Receive outside funds	20	16	11
Receive government funds	4	2	3
Are aware of Charitable Choice Legislation	46	35	23
Have a policy against taking government money	22	16	15
Would apply for government funds if available	40	52	36

More Arkansas congregations report that they are aware of Charitable Choice legislation, but this could be a function of the difference in time between Chaves' (1999a) survey and the FaithWorks Indiana survey, conducted in the Spring of 2000.



Interestingly, although more Arkansas congregations are participating in the provision of human services, and more of them report receiving outside funds and government funds, more Arkansas churches have a policy against taking government money and fewer would apply for government funds if available, than reported in Indiana or nationally. This could be a function of the denominations represented in the Arkansas versus Indiana/National surveys. When broken down by Chaves' (1999a) categories in Table 6, one can see a much greater representation of Theologically Conservative Denominations. However, unlike the Indiana data, there was little difference in the willingness of Theologically Conservative versus Mainline denominations to apply for Charitable Choice funds. Forty-six per cent of the Theologically Conservative congregations thought they might apply for government money to fund their community outreach ministries if it were available, versus 54% of the Mainline denominations. The difference was not statistically significant.

Table 6  
Comparison of Arkansas/Indiana/National Denominational Groupings

	Arkansas*	Indiana	National
Theologically Conservative	71.0%	65.0%	62.0%
Mainline	23.0%	27.0%	24.0%
Traditional Non-Mainline	0.7%	6.0%	8.0%
Roman Catholic	3.3%	2.0%	6.0%

\*Does not equal 100% due to "Other" Category

When the willingness to apply for government funds was broken down by the most common denominational types in Arkansas, some differences were noted. Table 7 reports the denominational differences on this question and others.

Table 7

Arkansas Denominational Responses to Selected Questions

Denomination	Have participated In Community Outreach Ministries	Partner With Other Organizations	Have Heard About Char Choice	Would Apply for Govt Funds
Southern Baptist	85%	73%	42%	23%
Pentecostal	61%	62%	31%	57%
American Baptist	76%	50%	52%	30%
Roman Catholic	94%	94%	42%	44%
Presbyterian	93%	84%	48%	28%
Missionary Baptist	70%	70%	49%	35%
Assembly of God	80%	63%	32%	55%
All Methodist	100%	85%	61%	46%

From Table 7, one can see that the majority of the denominations represented provide community outreach ministries, and do partner with other organizations in the provision of those ministries. However, less than half have heard about Charitable Choice in most cases. The most important thing to note about Table 7 is that there are fairly large denominational differences in the willingness to apply for government funds, ranging from 23% for Southern Baptists to 57% for Pentecostals. Table 8 illustrates denominational differences regarding the establishment of nonprofits. For government entities that wish to partner with Arkansas congregations, knowing which denominations are truly interested in Charitable Choice activities and are serious enough to establish a nonprofit organization to do it properly is useful in identifying the best places to begin their efforts.

Table 8

## Denominational Differences Regarding Nonprofit Status

Denomination	Have Established Nonprofit	Would Like Information on Establishing Nonprofits
Southern Baptist	10.5%	19.0%
Pentecostal	12.5%	29.0%
American Baptist	12.5%	20.0%
Roman Catholic	11.0%	37.5%
Presbyterian	8.0%	39.0%
Missionary Baptist	16.0%	39.5%
Assembly of God	4.0%	47.0%
All Methodists	12.0%	25.0%

Were the Programs Satisfactory and What Kinds of Problems Exist?

The vast majority of congregations were pleased with their programs, with 96% reporting that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the community outreach ministries. However, despite the number of volunteers involved, the congregations reported that their biggest problem in carrying out their programs was difficulty recruiting volunteers (n = 241). Another 141 reported difficulties obtaining funding. Lack of space (n = 57) and management/leadership issues (n = 55) were the next most frequent problems.

One set of respondents said abuse of services/knowing who is needy is a problem (n = 15) for their community outreach ministries, while another said the problem was identifying needs/finding needy people (n = 6). There was a difference in the emphasis in wording that was detected by the principal investigator when follow-up calls were made on a limited basis. Some of the respondents hinted at the idea that they were concerned that their services were abused by people who were not really in need, while others were concerned with getting the word out to folks who needed the program. Getting the word

out to potential clients does seem to be problematic, so that the Faulkner County Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) Coalition was prompted to try a new approach. For about two years, the TEA Coalition provided client tracking software (the Client Management System) that could be purchased by service providers. The software enabled participating organizations to have online access to information on the types of services that a client had received, allowing for better utilization of limited resources. Unfortunately, the program ended when the company that developed and supported the software went out of business. (Source: Faulkner County United Way)

Because the author had heard the past problems of a faith-based ministry with regard to referrals from the Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) program (the name for the Arkansas welfare reform program), the Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of County Operations was contacted. Melissa Dean, Assistant Director of County Operations, said that the exact referral process varies with each DHS county office. Each county office has its own directory of services and referrals may be made informally to service providers, as simply as by giving the client the name of the service provider. In some cases where life skills and job readiness training are provided, for example, with the provider reimbursed by DHS for costs, the caseworker will discuss the service provider options with the client, the client will decide which provider she prefers, the service provider will be given the name and contact information for the client, and the caseworker will follow-up with both the client and the provider to make sure that contact is made. Ms. Dean says that in some larger communities there is competition among service providers for clients.

The congregations reported that some factors were very important in starting community outreach ministries. The willingness of someone to take a leadership role was judged by 90% of the congregations to be of the utmost importance. The congregations also reported that religious beliefs and the availability of help from others were also of great importance (73.6% and 74.8% respectively). The availability of money was deemed to be of less importance to responding congregations, with only 66% indicating that it was important.

#### What Kinds of Information/Assistance Did the Congregations Most Need?

Unique to this survey were questions about the kinds of assistance or information that Arkansas congregations need as they become (more) involved in providing social service or community outreach-type ministries. The respondents were allowed to choose all that applied from a list of twelve possibilities. Table 8 displays the results in order of frequency.

Table 8

Types of Assistance Needed by Congregations in Order to  
Provide Community Service Ministries

Types of Assistance	Number Responding
A. How to strengthen your congregation's impact on the community	281
B. How to match community needs to your congregation's values	272
C. How to access relevant funding sources	270
D. How to identify community needs	268
E. How to measure outcomes and results	263
F. How to write funding proposals	254
G. Services and practices allowed under Charitable Choice	243
H. Good financial management practices	243
I. How to network with other churches on collaborative projects	235
J. Best practices in service development and delivery	225
K. How to partner with another nonprofit organization	208
L. How to set up a separate 501(c)3 organization	166

The number of congregations expressing interest in information about setting up a separate 501(c)3 organization was consistent with a similar question earlier in the survey. The churches were not particularly interested in establishing nonprofit organizations to provide their community service ministries, with one statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) exception--43% of black congregations versus 8% of white congregations would be willing to establish a separate nonprofit organization.

If one disregards this one difference (black churches are more willing to establish nonprofits) and looks at the overall pattern on all the rest of this set of questions, however, the number of respondents was equal or greater to the number of churches that said they would apply for government money to support their community service ministry if it were available (30-40%). This similarity possibly indicates two things: 1.

That the congregations are willing to provide community outreach ministries with or without government funding, and 2. That there is a large pool of congregations willing to get involved in Charitable Choice types of activities under the right circumstances. The large number of responses to A and B (“how to strengthen your congregation’s impact on the community” and “how to match community needs to your congregation’s values”) seems to indicate that the churches do want to make a difference, but on their own terms. Additionally, the large number of congregations responding that they would like information on how to network with other churches or how to partner with another nonprofit organization, along with the 73% that responded that they already partner with other organizations or churches in delivery of community outreach ministries, supports the willingness of churches to pool their resources.

Each of the types of assistance in Table 8 represents a possible topic for a training workshop. Other possibilities for training come from a set of questions discussed earlier, dealing with the kinds of problems that the congregations are experiencing with their existing community outreach ministries. A large number ( $n = 241$ ) of the congregations reported one of their big problems was a difficulty in recruiting volunteers. A smaller number ( $n = 55$ ) stated that management/leadership issues were a problem for them, but this number represents approximately ten per cent of the congregations that currently provide community outreach ministries. Other problem areas were along the same themes addressed in Table 8, for example, needs assessment and funding.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

What do the results of this study of faith-based congregations in Arkansas mean for policy-makers who want to increase the number of faith-based partnerships? With

limited financial and staff resources, how does one best get the word out about Charitable Choice and President Bush's faith-based initiative? What kinds of assistance would best enable congregations to successfully develop community outreach programs, fund and implement them, and demonstrate positive results? Recommendations along these lines are now offered.

1. Target those groups most amenable to faith-based initiatives.

The data from this study indicate that certain denominations are much more agreeable to applying for government funds than others. Based on answers to the question, "Would your congregation apply for government money to support community outreach programs if it were available?" Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Methodist, and Assembly of God churches are interested and of sufficient numbers in the state to make a targeted effort toward their denominations fruitful. One United Methodist pastor interviewed informally for this paper has some good advice on how to reach some denominations:

. . . I am not anti-government in any way, but when I receive a brochure for a workshop on something and it comes from the state or an unknown source it usually goes into the trash in about 1/2 second. Convince the bishop of the Methodist church in Arkansas that this is a good thing and they [will] pull the rest of the strings and light the fire under all the pastors. The good thing about Methodist and Catholics is that we are connectional and that you can work from the top down so that the information comes from known and trusted resource. (email communication, February 2004)

Although under-represented in the survey, Black congregations are very interested in faith-based initiatives as measured by numerous questions. More than 80% of the respondents answered yes when asked if they currently had a community outreach ministry, partnered with other organizations or churches, had established a separate



nonprofit, had ministries already supported by outside funds, had heard about Charitable Choice, and would apply for government money; only one had a policy against receiving funds from local, state or federal government.

The larger the congregation is, the more likely it is to provide community service ministries, so that faith-based initiatives might best be directed to larger churches. The problem comes with the fact that many of the urgent needs in Arkansas are not in highly populated areas. It could prove beneficial to encourage larger congregations in more affluent areas to partner with smaller congregations in the areas where needs are greater, in order to best meet the ideals of Charitable Choice and the White House Faith-based Initiative.

2. Continue efforts to engage all congregations in non-governmental partnerships to provide community outreach ministries to those in need.

The vast majority of congregations already provide community outreach ministries and one third expressed willingness to do more, as evidenced by the questions regarding assistance for their community outreach programs. Almost three-fourths already partner with some group to provide their social service programs. Partnerships that match nonprofit organizations that are willing to meet government standards for funding with congregations who might be willing to provide volunteers or matching funds, for example, can be encouraged. Such partnerships are one way to get around the unwillingness of most of the churches surveyed to set up separate 501(c)3 organizations for their outreach ministries.

One way to encourage partnerships among Arkansas congregations is to market a proven model to them. Examples like Sharefest and the Manna Center have already been

mentioned. Another such example is Step Ministries in Pulaski County. Step Ministries has several tried and true programs for at-risk school age children, mostly in the Central Arkansas area, but with plans to extend some of their programs to communities in East Arkansas. In existence for eighteen years, ten churches of varied backgrounds and locales provide funding and volunteers to this faith-based organization: Cornerstone Bible Fellowship, Covenant Presbyterian of Little Rock, Fellowship Bible Churches of Little Rock and North Little Rock, First United Methodist of Maumelle, Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas, Park Hill Baptist, Silver City Church, First Baptist of North Little Rock, and Bible Church of Little Rock. President of Step Ministries, Mike Russ, says that many congregations will try to minister to inner-city kids but they will experience burnout after two to three years because they rely too much on management that is either totally volunteer or part-time. Russ believes that to provide an inner city ministry "it takes dedicated full time staff at both the management and front line staff levels. However, you must still leverage volunteers to gain coverage of the target population being served and to gain support from the faith-based community." The benefit of programs like those provided by Step Ministries is that their experience has enabled them to withstand the test of time and to continue growing.

3. Continue to inform the faith-based community of the benefits of establishing a nonprofit organization and to provide technical assistance to those congregations considering such a step.

Despite the unwillingness of some congregations to establish separate 501(c)3s for their community outreach ministries, this step may be necessary to help them keep their regular church activities separate from their community outreach ministries that

receive external funding. The Director of the Division of Volunteerism, Sherry Anderson, reminds that most churches already have 501(c)3 status by virtue of their denominational status. The 501(c)3 status denotes them as a nonprofit that may provide tax receipts for donations accepted. Even WITH the nonprofit status, though, the congregations must keep a bank account and accounting record for their externally funded outreach ministries separate from the regular church collections and expenditures. It is important for congregations to know that they should maintain fiscal separation and accountability for government funds in all cases.

4. Improve referral mechanisms to congregational outreach ministries.

Congregations do want to make sure they are serving those truly in need, and they oftentimes need help finding those in need of their services. Congregations need to understand both the formal and informal referral mechanisms in place, not only in DHS, but in other agencies with Faith-Based Initiative and Charitable Choice programs. In many cases they will need technical assistance to properly market their programs to both the agencies and to potential clients.

5. Establish training programs to meet the needs addressed by Table 8.

One area particularly ripe for training is that of volunteer management. Most of the programs are run by volunteers, and it is often difficult to keep volunteers engaged for sustained efforts, and to even recruit volunteers at all in some areas, depending on the demographics of the community. Given the strength of the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism in these matters, and its existing outreach efforts to faith-based organizations (see Jeremiah Dubbs' (2004) paper, "A Matter of Faith: Goal Congruence and the Faith-Based Initiative in Arkansas), it seems reasonable to expect the Division of

Volunteerism to take a major role in developing the capacity of faith-based organizations in the state to provide social services.

6. View faith-based organizations as equal partners in meeting human needs.

Much of the rhetoric about the faith-based initiative is that it is uni-directional and uni-dimensional--that churches are only interested because of the funds they think they can get from government, and that once they find out there is little, if any, new money, they will evaporate from this picture. The evidence from this study is much to the contrary. The majority of Arkansas congregations are currently providing services to meet human needs without government financial assistance, and they will continue to do so without government financial assistance. However, they can still benefit from a partnership with government organizations that helps them fine-tune their programmatic and managerial capacities. Instead of being a financial drain on scarce public funds, faith-based organizations have the potential to be an effective supplement to public funds.

#### **Further Discussion and Conclusion:**

A companion study of this same data set was recently conducted by Anya Makonogova ("Charitable Choice in Arkansas," 2003), a graduate student in Public Administration at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. In this study, Makogonova notes that most of the faith-based community outreach programs currently operating in Arkansas are small, with modest budgets, and operated mostly by volunteers with little professional expertise in either the programmatic or administrative aspects of their outreach ministries. Makogonova points out the resulting problematic policy implications for those governmental units in the state that may pursue partnerships with faith-based organizations, concluding with the remark:

Additionally, it is not clear whether capacity building efforts directed towards small congregational service providers will in fact benefit those organizations and their clients. It may in fact destroy their closeness to the people they serve and eliminate their family-like atmosphere that makes them distinctive, and as many believe, effective (p. 25).

The policy implications pointed out by Makogonova should not be dismissed; however, the premise of this needs assessment is that faith-based partnerships with governmental social service organizations CAN be effective, with the proper assistance. By utilizing the data from the Arkansas congregations in this sample as a guide for action, the capacity of these congregations to be effective partners can be enhanced.

#### Note 1

Based on Chaves (1999a) study--

*Theologically Conservative Denominations include: Adventist, Apostolic, Assembly of God, Baptist, Brethren, Church of Christ (Christian), Church of Nazarene, Evangelical, Holiness, Independent, Independent Christian, Interdenominational, Methodist, Missouri- Synod Lutheran, and Southern Baptist.*

*Mainline Denominations include: American Baptist, Episcopalian, Disciples of Christ, ELCA Lutheran, Presbyterian USA, United Methodist, United Church of Christ.*

*Traditional Non-Mainline Denominations include: Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Mennonite, Unitarian-Universalist, Wesleyan.*

*Roman Catholic*

For the purposes of this study, the following denominational groups responding to the Arkansas survey were also considered to be Theologically Conservative: Missionary Baptist, Church of Christ, Pentecostal, Church of God, Freewill Baptist, and any varieties of Baptist other than American Baptist.

## Appendix A

### Survey of Arkansas Congregation's Human Service Programs

1a. Has your congregation participated in or supported social service, community development, or neighborhood organizing projects of any sort within the past 12 months? Please *don't* include projects that use or rent space in your building but have no other connection to your congregation.

Yes	(skip to Q 2a)	1
No		2

1b. What are some of the reasons why your congregation does not participate in these kinds of programs?

Theological	(skip to Q 12)	1
Financial	(skip to Q 10a)	2
Lack of time, energy, people	(skip to Q 10a)	3
Other	(skip to Q 10a)	4

2a. What projects or programs have you sponsored or participated in?

2b. For each of these, please tell me whether it is a program or project completely run by your congregation, or whether it is a program that is run by or in collaboration with other groups or organizations.

2c. ASK ONLY ABOUT PROGRAMS THAT ARE NOT PROGRAMS OF JUST THIS CONGREGATION:

With what other organizations does your congregation collaborate on this program?

3. How much money, overall, did your congregation directly receive on all of these projects or programs within the past 12 months? Here I'm asking about direct cash donations from your congregation, not counting staff time or volunteer time.  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

4a. Within the past 12 months, has anyone who is paid by your congregation spent more than 25% of their work time on one or more of these projects?

Yes		1
No	(skip to Q 5a)	2

4b. How many of your paid staff spent more than 25% of their work time on one or more of these projects? \_\_\_\_\_

5a. Has anyone from your congregation done any volunteer work for one or more of these programs within the past 12 months?

Yes		1
No	(skip to Q 6)	2

5b. Of the regularly participating adults in your congregation, how many of them would you say did volunteer work at least once for one or more of these programs within the past 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_

5c. Of the regularly participating youth in your congregation, how many of them would you say did volunteer work at least once for one or more of these programs within the past 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How satisfied are you overall with how well your program(s) is/are going?

Very satisfied	1
Somewhat satisfied	2
Not satisfied at all	3

7. What have been some of the problems that you have had in carrying out your program(s)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. For each of the factors I will mention, please tell me how important it is for starting a congregational human services program. Please use a scale of 1 to 5 with "1" being least important and "5" being most important.

	Least Important			Most Important	
Someone willing to take leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Religious beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
Money	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of help from others	1	2	3	4	5
Community needs	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION ON FUNDING

9a. Are any of the programs you've mentioned supported by outside funds directly provided to your congregation by other agencies or organizations?

Yes		1
No	(skip to Q10a)	2

9b. Did any of these funds come as donations from foundations, businesses or the United Way?

Yes		1
No	(skip to Q9d)	2

9c. How much did your congregation receive from foundations, businesses or the United Way in your most recent fiscal year? \$\_\_\_\_\_

9d. Did any of these funds come from local, state or federal government?

Yes		1
No	(skip to Q10a)	2

9e. How much money did your congregation receive from the government in grants, contracts, or fees during your most recent fiscal year? \$\_\_\_\_\_  
(skip to Q12)

10a. Have you heard about recently passed federal legislation that would enable religious congregations to apply for public money to support their human services programs?

Yes		1
No		2

10b. Does your congregation have a policy against receiving funds from local, state, or federal government?

Yes	(skip to Q12)	1
No		2

10c. Do you think your congregation would apply for government money to support human services programs if it was available?

Yes		1
No		2

11. If you had government money right now to support human services programs, what is the most important thing you would do differently?

---

Now I would like to ask you just a few descriptive questions about your congregation.

12a. IF DENOMINATION IS APPARENT FROM THE NAME, FILL IN HERE:

---

(skip to Q 13)



12b. Is your congregation a member of a denomination, or is it nondenominational?

Nondenominational 1

12c. If respondent says denomination, ask what denomination is that?

Denomination name: \_\_\_\_\_ 2

13. How many people do you consider to be members of your congregation?  
IF RESPONDENT ASKS IF CHILDREN ARE INCLUDED, SAY HOWEVER YOU  
COUNT THEM IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

IF RESPONDENT SAYS THEY COUNT ONLY FAMILIES, ASK FOR THE  
NUMBER OF FAMILIES.

\_\_\_\_\_  
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS  
Adults only 1  
Adults and children 2  
\_\_\_\_\_  
FAMILIES

14. What is the racial and ethnic composition of your membership? That is, what  
percent of our membership falls into each of these groups? [READ TO RESPONDENT]

\_\_\_\_\_ % African American/Black  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Caucasian/White  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Hispanic/Latino  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Asian/Pacific Islander  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Other  
Which? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Is your congregation located in an urban, suburban, or rural location?

Urban 1  
Suburban 2  
Rural 3  
Other/mixed [ONLY IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS] 4

## CAPACITY SECTION

16. If your congregation would apply for government money to support your human services programs, what kinds of support would be most helpful to you? (choose all that apply)

- ☐ Knowledge of allowable services and practices under the charitable choice provision
- ☐ Knowledge of how to obtain status as a separate not-for-profit entity
- ☐ Knowledge of how to partner with an intermediary organization
- ☐ Knowledge of best practices in service development and delivery
- ☐ Knowledge of financial management practices
- ☐ Knowledge of how to match community needs with our congregation's values and mission
- ☐ Knowledge of benefits of partnering/coalition building/collaboration
- ☐ Knowledge of how to access relevant funding sources
- ☐ Knowledge of how to write proposals for funding
- ☐ Knowledge of strategies for strengthening your congregation's impact on the community
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

17. Have you established a nonprofit organization separate from your church to provide human services?

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No  | 2 |

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